WILLIAM *late Viscount of* STAFFORD, *His last Speech upon the Scaffold on* Tower-hill, Decemb. 29. 1680, *as it was given by his own hand to a Spectator there.*

BY the permission of Almighty God, I am this day brought hither to suffer death as if I were Guilty of High Treason. I do most truly in the presence of the Eternal, Omnipotent, and All-knowing God, protest upon my Salvation, that I am as innocent as it is possible for any man to be, so much as in a thought, of the Crimes laid to my Charge.

I acknowledge it to be a particular grace and favour of the Holy Trinity, to have given me this long time to prepare my self for Eternity, I have not made so good use of that grace as I ought to have done; partly by my not having so well recollected my self, as I might have done; and partly because not only my Friends, but my Wife and Children, have for several days been forbid to see me, but in the presence of one of my Warders. This hath been a great trouble and distraction unto me, but I hope God of his Infinite Mercy will pardon my Defects, and accept of my good Intentions.

Since my long Imprisonment I have considered often what could be the Original Cause of my being thus accused, since I knew my self not culpable, so much as in a thought; and I cannot believe it to be upon any other account than my being of the Church of *Rome*. I have no reason to be ashamed of my Religion, for it teacheth nothing but the Right Worshipping of God, Obedience to the King, and due Subordination to the Temporal Laws of the Kingdom. And I do submit to all Articles of Faith believed and taught in the Catholick Church, believing them to be most consonant to the Word of God. And whereas it hath so much and often been objected, *That the Church holds that Sovereign Princes, Excommunicated by the Pope, may by their Subjects be Deposed or Murthered:* As to the Murther of Princes, I have been taught as a Matter of Faith in the Catholick Faith, *That such Doctrine of Deposing Princes, is diabolical, horrid, and detestable, and contrary to the Law of God, Nature, and Nations:* and as such from my heart I renounce and abominate it. As for the Doctrine of Deposing of Princes, I know some Divines of the Catholick Church hold it, but as able and learned as they have written against it: but it was not pretended to be the Doctrine of the Church, that is, any Point of Catholick Faith: wherefore I do here in my Conscience declare that it is my true and real Judgement, That the same Doctrine of Deposing Kings, is contrary to the Fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, injurious to Sovereign Power, and consequently would be in me or any other of his Majesties Subjects, impious and damnable. I believe and profess, That there is One God, One Saviour, One Holy Catholick Church, in which thorow the Mercy, Grace, and Goodness of God, I die a member.

To my great and unspeakable grief, I have offended God in many things, by many great Offences, but I give him most humble thanks, not in any of those Crimes of which I was Accused.

All the Members of either House having liberty to propose in the House what they think fit for the good of the Kingdom, accordingly I proposed what I thought fit, the House is Judge of the fitness or unfitness of it; and I think I never said any thing that was unfitting there, or contrary to the Law and Use of Parliament: for certainly if I had, the Lords would as they might, have some way punished me: so I am not culpable before God.

It is much reported of Indulgences, Dispensations, Pardons, to Murther, Rebel, Lie, Forswear, and Commit such other Crimes held and given in the Church; I do here profess in the presence of God, I never learned, believed, or practised any such things, but the contrary; and I speak this without any Equivocation, or Reservation whatsoever: and certainly were I guilty, either my self, or knew of any one that were guilty, whosoever that were so, of any of those Crimes of which I am accused, I were not only the greatest Fool imaginable, but a perfect Mad-man, and as wicked as any of those, that so falsly have accused me; and so am guilty of Self Murther, which is a most grievous and hainous Sin; and though I was last Impeached at the Lords Bar, yet I have great grounds to believe that I was first brought to Trial, on the belief, that to save my life I would make some great Discovery; and truly so I would, had I known any such thing of any ill Design or Illegal dangerous Plot, either of my self or any other person whosoever, without Exception. But had I a thousand lives, I would lose them all, rather than falsly accuse, either my self or any other whosoever. And if I had known of any Treason, and should thus deny it, as I do now upon my salvation; at this time, I should have no hope of salvation; which now I have thorow the merits of Christ Jesus. I do

I do beſeech God to bleſs his Majeſty, who is my lawful King and Sovereign, who I was always by all Laws Humane and Divine, bound to Obey; and I am ſure that no Power upon Earth, either ſingly or all together, can legally allow me or any body elſe, to lift a hand againſt him, or his Legal Authority. I do hold that the Conſtitution of the Government of this Kingdom, is the only way to continue peace and quietneſs; which God long continue.

Next to Treaſon, I hold Murther in abhorrence, and have ever done, and do; and I do ſincerely profeſs, that if I could at this time free my ſelf immediately, and eſtabliſh what Religion I would, and what Government I would, and make my ſelf as great as I could wiſh, and all by the death of one of thoſe Fellows, that by their perjuries have brought me to the place where I am, I ſo much abhor to be the cauſe of any Mans death, that I would not any way be the cauſe of their Murther; how much leſs would I endeavour the Aſſaſſination of his Majeſty, whom I hold to be as Gracious a King as ever this or any other Nation had; and under whom the People may enjoy their Liberties, as much as ever any did; and if it pleaſe God to grant him Life and Happineſs, according as I have always wiſhed and prayed for, I am morally perſwaded, that he and all his Dominions, will be as happy and proſperous as ever people were; which I beſeech God grant.

I do moſt humbly ask pardon of the Almighty and All-merciful God, for all the great Offences I have committed againſt his Divine Majeſty, and I know he would not have the Death and Confuſion of a Sinner, but that he may repent and live: in that aſſurance I hope, knowing he never deſpiſeth a Contrite Heart; and though I have not ſo feeling a Contrition as I would, yet I have it as well as I can; and I doubt not but that God will accept of the Good Will.

I do deſire that all people will forgive me any Injury that I have done them in any thing, either wilfully or by chance, and I do heartily forgive all people in the World that have injured me; I forgive even thoſe perjured men that ſo falſly have brought me hither by their perjuries.

I do now upon my Death and Salvation aver, that I never ſpoke one word either to *Oates* or *Turberville*, or to my knowledge ever ſaw them, until my Tryal; and for *Dugdale* I never ſpoke unto him of any thing but about a Foot-boy or Foot-man, or Foot-Race; and never was then alone with him: All the puniſhment that I wiſh them, is, that they may repent and acknowledge the wrong that they have done me; then it will appear how Innocent I am: God forgive them! I have a great confidence that it will pleaſe Almighty God, and that he will in a ſhort time bring truth to light; then you and all the World will ſee and know what injury they have done me.

Before I have made it appear that I have ſome Conſcience: for if I had none, certainly I would have ſaved my Life by acknowledging my ſelf Guilty; which I could have done, though I know I am not in the leaſt Guilty. And I having ſome Conſcience, make very little uſe of it; for I throw my ſelf into eternal Pain by thus plainly and conſtantly denying thus at my Death, the knowledge of what I am accuſed of in the leaſt.

I have ſaid thus much in diſcharge of my Conſcience, and do aver upon my Salvation, what I have ſaid to be really true.

I ſhall ſay little of my Tryal; and whether it were all according to the known Law, I am not much a Party to ſay much of it: if it were not ſo, God forgive him or them that were the cauſe of it.

My Judges were all Perſons of Honour, who were all as much bound to judge rightly, as if they had been upon Oath upon what was legally proved; and not to Vote but according as in their Conſciences they were ſatisfied; and if any of them did otherwiſe, upon any account whatſoever, I beſeech God forgive them, I do ſo heartily.

I ſhall end with my hearty prayers for the happineſs of his Majeſty, that he may enjoy all happineſs in this world and the world to come; and govern his people according to the Laws of God; and that the People may be ſenſible what a Bleſſing God hath ſo miraculouſly given them, and obey him as they ought. I ask pardon with a proſtrate heart of Almighty God, for all the great Offences that I have committed againſt his Divine Majeſty, and hope through the Merits and Paſſion of Chriſt Jeſus, to obtain everlaſting Happineſs; into whoſe hands I commit my Spirit, asking Pardon of every perſon that I have done any wrong unto: I do freely forgive all that have any ways wronged me; I do with all the Devotion and Repentance that I can, humbly invoke the mercy of our Bleſſed Saviour.

I beſeech God not to revenge my innocent Blood on the Nation, or on thoſe that were the Cauſers of it, with my laſt Breath. I do with my laſt Breath truly aſſert my *Innocency*, and hope the Omnipotent All-ſeeing Juſt God will deal with me accordingly.

FINIS.

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